



## CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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### Testimony before the Labor and Public Employees Committee Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the Labor and Public employees committee, my name is Lori Pelletier and I serve as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, which has over 900 affiliated local unions representing the working men and women from every one of our 169 cities and towns, and am here to testify on the following bills.

#### **H.B. No. 5058 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE FOR CERTAIN STATE EMPLOYEES.**

We support this legislation; however it falls terribly short of providing protection for all of Connecticut's workers. Agricultural workers are some of the hardest working, most abused workers in our state yet this bill does not provide them with the ability to have voice in their workplace. Agricultural workers are not protected from abusive employers when it comes to OSHA regulation, the 40 hour work week or the minimum wage. They are an exploited class of workers and it should be paramount to this legislative body and particularly the Labor committee that this historic wrong be righted. All workers should be respected whether they are skilled or unskilled, degreed or apprenticed, identify as a man or as a woman, and the one way to ensure they get the respect they deserve is to give them the ability to join a union if they so chose.

Also excluded from this bill are the non partisan employees covered by legislative management. Once again these are hardworking men and women should have the right to assemble together as members of a labor organization if that is what they want to do. As much as we appreciate the bill as written it must be amended to end all of the historic exemptions under our laws. We believe that the ability to join a labor organization is a basic human right no matter who the employer happens to be.

The question that the members of this committee, so many of whom have supported organizing rights for workers on sovereign Indian lands, marched with state employees, stood with Pratt workers or mourned with construction workers, must ask themselves is what is the interest of the State of CT in denying the right to organize to the low wage workers engaged in agriculture.? I believe if you ask the question, you will see it has no answer.

We hope that you ask that question before your JF deadline and agricultural workers to this bill

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We also support :

**S.B. No. 239 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONTINUATION OF DAY CARE SUBSIDIES TO UNEMPLOYED WORKERS.**

**S.B. No. 243 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR THOSE PERSONS WHO BECOME DISABLED WHILE UNEMPLOYED.**

**H.B. No. 5284 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS AND DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES.**

**H.B. No. 5285 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING STATE EMPLOYEES AND VIOLENCE AND BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE.**

**S.B. No. 261 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT JOB CORPS TASK FORCE.**

**S.B. No. 241 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND PREQUALIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF CONTRACTORS.** We support this legislation. At a time when State resources are at a premium it is critically important that we spend our tax dollars on reputable contractors, not those who have been disbarred in other states.

**S.B. No. 242 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RETENTION OF JOBS IN CONNECTICUT.** We support this legislation. This policy should have been made into law years ago, but shortsightedness prevented its passage. We can ill afford to fail again. Let's use Connecticut tax dollars to their fullest extent. By enacting this common sense "take care of home" legislation we will do just that. First and foremost we should buy made in Connecticut, and then look for the "Made in USA" label. Let's stimulate our own economy, not the economy of countries where they don't respect workers, women and the rule of law. We appreciate this Committee's effort in leading this charge.

Thank you to the Committee for holding this public hearing and if you have any question I'd be happy to address them.